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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effectiveness of a pilot Reading Recovery (RR) program. Guidelines for the project were set forth in a joint proposal by the Portland Public Schools and Portland State University. Subjects, 40 first grade students enrolled in the Portland Public School system and identified as at-risk, were given instruction equivalent to between 7 and 12 weeks, depending on the availability of trained RR teachers. Posttests were given to the subjects at the end of the school year. The pilot program encountered three problems which seriously affected its implementation: (1) uncertainties concerning the level of difficulty of the books used; (2) difficulties in accurately determining how to gauge the children's rates of progress; and (3) inadequate duration of instruction. Because of these problems, the study does not attempt to assess the pilot RR program. However, the experiences resulting from the pilot program indicated that there are many encouraging signs for the success of a full-fledged RR program. (Three tables and six figures of data are included, as is a postscript comparing the RR pilot project implemented independently in Portland and RR implemented under trained teacher leaders in sites in Ohio.) (RS)

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Gaining Experience with Reading Recovery

A Pilot Project between Portland Public Schools and Portland State University.

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Portland State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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The Context of the Project.

The work of Marie Clay at the University of Auckland in New Zealand is well known to educators in the United States. For a number of years she has observed the behavior of young children learning to read and has developed procedures for identifying children at risk and preventing reading failure. Accounts of this work have appeared in texts, in professional journals, and most specifically in one of her books, The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties: A Diagnostic Survey with Recovery Procedures, published by Heinemann Educational Books, first edition 1972, second edition 1979, and third edition 1985.

At Portland State University, we first became seriously interested in this work in 1981. We began to examine and make use of the diagnostic survey with five, six, and seven-year old children. We were interested in a number of characteristics of the survey and how and when to use it in American schools. An account of this work was given at the 28th Annual Conference of the International Reading Association at Anaheim, California, in 1983, and summarized in a written report (Dunkeld and Dunbar,

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Portland State University, 1984).

Following our examination of the diagnostic survey, we began to familiarize ourselves more thoroughly with the recovery procedures. We invited graduate students to tutor individual children for short periods of time and report informally on their use of the recovery procedures. It became very clear that the full implementation of a Reading Recovery program in a school setting, as described in Marie Clay's text, would require major administrative commitments of time and resources. The teachers too would be taking on an intensive schedule of supervised instruction and a demanding sequence of observation and discussion sessions.

In the Spring of 1987, Judy Koford, principal of Bridger School in Portland Public Schools, visited Ohio State University and learned of their four-year association with Dr. Clay and their extensive and highly successful experiences in the implementation of Reading Recovery programs in Columbus Public Schools and the State of Ohio. Under Dr. Clay's guidance, teachers in Columbus and other Ohio communities had managed to replicate the high levels of success established in the New Zealand schools. Working individually with the lowest achievers in first grade, for thirty minutes per day, every school day, Ohio teachers, trained in Reading Recovery, had found that after an average of fifteen weeks of this intensive instruction, 70% of the students were able to return to their normal classroom programs able to read well enough to work in class without

further remedial assistance. (Reading Recovery Vol. I No. 1, Final Reports, the Ohio State University, College of Education, Feb. 1987)

On her return, aware of Portland State University's interest in Reading Recovery, Mrs. Koford enquired about the feasibility of such a program in the Portland Public Schools. At Portland State University, we were faced with an awkward decision. We had already demonstrated a more than passing interest in the program, were interested in learning more, and were desirous of assisting Portland Public Schools in any possible way. However, we took to heart Marie Clay's cautionary statements in The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties:

". . . we have rarely seen satisfactory programmes devised by teachers who have not been trained in the procedures and in how to mount the programme . . .. One assumes that training will accompany any attempts to use the procedures. Trying to make them work from the written account in this book is unlikely to bring the success that can be achieved in a fully-fledged training programme which includes observation and discussion sessions."

We thought we had a sound grasp of the theory of the program, and good experience with the diagnostic survey and most of the instructional procedures. On the other hand we had no experience with sustained implementation over a period of time. We were well aware of the intensity of the program and the heavy demands that would be placed upon both the staff and

participants. We knew of the work at Ohio State University but knew nothing of any plans for teacher-leader training or nation-wide dissemination. At that time the program had not been added to the list of those on the National Dissemination Network. It appeared to us that the only immediate way for school districts to gain experience with the program was to establish carefully monitored pilot projects of their own.

We therefore responded to Portland Public Schools enquiry firstly by disclosing the precise nature of our experience with the program, secondly by describing in detail the considerable demands of the program, and thirdly by proposing a small pilot project of one year's duration, provided we could be assured that all of the essential features of the program would be included. At the end of the project, Portland Public Schools would be in a position to evaluate our attempts, and make decisions about whether or not to continue these efforts.

During the summer of 1987, meetings were held between representatives of Portland Public Schools and Portland State University. The meetings were attended by a director of instruction; three school principals; representatives from the Chapter I Program, the Office of Finance, the Research and Evaluation Department, and the Curriculum Department; a prospective Reading Recovery teacher; and a member of the University faculty, the writer of this report. The research reports from Ohio State University were examined and the extensive commitments needed to mount such a program were fully

explored. A detailed proposal for a pilot project was prepared.

The 1987-1988 Portland Public Schools - Portland State University Reading Recovery Proposal

Despite the very short lead-time, administrators of the Chapter I Program of Portland Public Schools and a Director of Instruction were enthusiastic about the potential for Reading Recovery and agreed to mount a pilot project during the 1987-1988 school year provided there was "sufficient interest" from the schools. The guidelines were as follows:

1. The goals of the project would be to gain experience with Reading Recovery:
   a) to find out what effects an independently mounted trial Reading Recovery program would have on children at risk in the first grade by the end of the first grade year,
   b) to find out over a period of time whether any beneficial effects would be sustained through later elementary school years, and
   c) in the process, to find out whether the Reading Recovery program could be implemented successfully from the descriptions provided in The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties without experienced supervision.
2. A small number of Chapter I teachers would be informed and invited to participate in Reading Recovery training.
3. School principals would have to agree to assign those teachers

a) to work with two low-achieving first grade students individually for thirty minutes every school day, and

b) to attend training sessions at Portland State University from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. every Thursday.

4. Diagnostic training in the early detection of reading difficulty would take place in October and November. By the end of November, each Reading Recovery trainee would, in consultation with the first grade teachers, identify the eight lowest achieving first grade children in each school and administer The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties diagnostic survey to those children. From these eight children, any considered not to be at risk would be removed. From those remaining, two would be randomly selected to receive Reading Recovery training. The others would remain with their regular school programs and form a comparison group.

5. Reading Recovery training and implementation would commence simultaneously in December. Each teacher in turn would be required to bring a child to the training sessions at P.S.U., to conduct a demonstration lesson in an observation room behind a one-way window, and be observed and critiqued by the other members of the group.

6. The teachers would keep detailed records of their daily work.

7. The Research and Evaluation Department would assign an evaluator to the project.

Implementation of the Pilot Project.

In September 1987, principals in the Franklin-Marshall Cluster, one of seven administrative units within Portland Public Schools, were informed of the availability of and the conditions for the Reading Recovery Pilot Project for the current school year. By late October, three school principals had identified potential Reading Recovery trainees. One of these principals was the one who had originated the project. In addition, she adjusted her own schedule to enable her to work with two children and participate fully as a Reading Recovery trainee. The university instructor also made arrangements to work with two children every morning in a Portland school and take on the dual role of both trainer and trainee. This meant that if the project were to be implemented, five teachers would each be working with two children every morning. Two of the teachers would work at one site. The other three teachers would be working at different sites. The Chapter I administrative team considered this sufficient interest for the project to proceed.

Planning and obtaining approvals had taken longer than expected. The project started six weeks later than originally scheduled, but otherwise proceeded as planned. Training in the early detection of reading difficulties began in late November. In four two-and-a-half-hour sessions, the trainees learned how to administer, score, and interpret each of the six sections of the diagnostic survey. They practiced with young children not

eligible for the program.

Pre Testing and the Selection of Children for the Project.

Preparation for instruction and the selection of children to participate in the project took place in the second and third weeks of January. At each site, the trainees, in consultation with all of the first grade teachers, selected the eight lowest achieving first grade children in the school. Each of these children was then pre-tested with The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties diagnostic survey.

At this stage, each trainee then surveyed the scores and, once again in consultation with the first grade teachers, removed from further consideration any child who appeared not to be at risk. There were eight children in this category. They are referred to as N/C (Not Considered) children. They were not considered for selection for Reading Recovery but their names were retained so that comparisons could be made at the end of the project. The remaining thirty-two children all appeared to be suitable candidates for Reading Recovery. At each site, the trainees then randomly drew two names from this group. These ten children, referred to as RR (Reading Recovery) children, received our own independent version of Reading Recovery training. The other twenty-two children are referred to as D/C (Direct Comparison) children. One of the RR children left the district at the end of the fifth week. She was replaced by another child whose name was randomly drawn from the DC children at her site.

Neither of these children are included in the data. Everyone else remained with the project in their assigned categories until its completion in May 1988.

The scores on each section of the survey and the category to which each was assigned are reported in Table I, for the thirty-eight children who remained with the project.

Instruction.

Work with the Reading Recovery children began in late January 1988 and continued until May. The five teachers met at Portland State University every Thursday afternoon that school was in session and took turns bringing their children for demonstration lessons behind the observation window. We first studied and, to the best of our understanding, implemented the suggestions for Roaming Around the Known. Then we began tutoring sessions following the format for a typical tutoring session. From then on we dealt as best we could with instructional issues as they arose. We attempted to resolve them by discussion and frequent reference to the text, Early Detection of Reading Difficulties. The first ten minutes of the first session behind the observation window proceeded in almost complete silence! We were all totally absorbed in the lesson. Gradually we began to notice and remark first upon the children's behavior and then the teachers' behavior and teachers' decisions. We were never sure whether we had noticed things that more experienced observers would have missed, and we may easily have misunderstood some of

the procedures. It is more than likely that many of our procedures resembled our previous experiences with the language experience approach, with a process approach to writing and with invented spelling more closely than a strict and faithful interpretation of Reading Recovery. We had no way of knowing. We would have welcomed trained supervision, but we knew that we were learning and gaining useful experience at every session.

In February we learned of an elementary teacher in Philomath, Oregon, who had spent a year in New Zealand, had studied with Marie Clay, and was familiar with Reading Recovery. The university instructor met with her, and, although she was not employed as a Reading Recovery teacher, discussion with her helped to clarify our interpretation of some of the procedures.

In March, first the university instructor, and later the Portland school principal, visited Ohio State University and Columbus Public Schools. We were both able to observe experienced, trained, Reading Recovery teachers working with their students. We were also able to attend training sessions in the schools and at the university and discuss details of the program with Reading Recovery staff. These experiences exerted a strong influence on the final two months of our project.

Instructional Concerns.

We knew from the beginning that we were making progress with the children and gaining valuable insights and instructional skills. We collected daily evidence that children were

developing appropriate reading strategies, using the three major cueing systems, and cross-checking on cues. It was clear through their writing that their letter knowledge and phonemic awareness were improving. We were learning from the children and from the text. The textbook was indispensable, but it was not sufficient for all of our needs.

We encountered two particularly thorny problems which seriously affected our ability to implement the program: the levels of difficulty of the books we were using and the problem of acceleration. As each week went by we also became increasingly concerned about time and the duration of the project.

Books.

At the beginning of the project, only one school had a set of books, **Story Box**, from the Wright Group, that was numbered according to difficulty and had been used with other Reading Recovery programs. We were dependent upon a hodge podge of trade books which were widely discrepant in their levels of difficulty. We were not sufficiently aware of the very fine gradations of difficulty that are possible at the beginning level and had no reliable way of computing or estimating them. Apart from mentioning the **Ready to Read** reading series and listing the levels of some of those books, the text gives no guidance on this topic. We had to rely entirely on our own crude estimates. Each site ordered suitable texts such as **Story Box; Sunshine**, (also

from the Wright Group); and **Ready to Read**, the texts from New Zealand distributed in the U.S. by Richard C. Owen Company. However, the books were not delivered in some cases until half way through the project.

Anyone familiar with Reading Recovery knows the importance of the careful sequencing of the difficulty of the texts. Our uncertainty about books affected our instructional decisions. Despite our careful taking of daily running reading records, the data lost much of their value without measures of text difficulty. We were able to make good observations about reading behaviors but not always able to select, by examination, texts at the appropriate levels of difficulty. Records of progress therefore for a while were almost meaningless.

Acceleration.

Without good estimates of text difficulty, it was also difficulty to gauge children's rates of progress. For the first three months of the program we were moving our children along at what we thought to be an appropriate rate. Acceleration was not a major concern. We were orderly and businesslike in our approach and our children were attentive and cooperative. It was clear that they were feeling successful and gaining confidence as readers, and, for a while, this was good enough for us. However, the visits to the Ohio schools made us very concerned about the pacing of our lessons and our rate of progress. We had no desire to put on unnecessary pressure or frustrate our children. Yet,

clearly, in order to remain cost effective and justify its existence, a labor intensive program such as this one must challenge children to do better work and must demonstrate faster rates of progress than typical remedial programs. We were never sure whether we were accelerating the children fast enough to match the accomplishments of Reading Recovery children in New Zealand or Ohio. For the last two months of the project therefore, after our visit to Ohio, we paid much more attention to the pacing of our lessons and children's acceleration through the program.

By this time, we had a better, but far from satisfactory, grasp of text difficulty than in the early months of the project. However, our efforts at acceleration also precipitated some unwelcome problems. We had always been pressed for time in the instructional sessions. Time became even more precious as we tried to introduce slightly more difficult texts. In addition, we began in our zeal to misplace some instructional priorities. We lost sight for a while of teaching for strategies and building upon the children's strengths. We became overly concerned about letter knowledge and paid insufficient attention to story meanings, to expression, to fluency, and to the children's sense of sentence and story structure. For the first time we found that our children were not looking forward to the sessions and were losing interest and attention. For a while we thought that these behaviors might be an unavoidable result of acceleration. With discussion, the frank confrontation of the issues, and a

change of emphasis, we learned otherwise. All too late we restored meaning and enjoyment of the texts to their proper place and found that they were quite compatible with fast paced lessons and appropriate acceleration. Even so, we were never certain that we had got the mix right.

Duration of the Project.

The project proceeded from late January until late May, that is four months minus the time for Spring vacation, professional days, and children's absences. At Site B, the Reading Recovery teacher was also unexpectedly called upon to assume some administrative duties for almost a month. This seriously interfered with her work and reduced the number of lessons she was able to give. The numbers of lessons completed were as follows:

Site A.1	Child # 2	50 lessons
	Child # 7	46 lessons
Site A.2	Child # 11	59 lessons
	Child # 15	46 lessons
Site B	Child # 22	49 lessons
	Child # 23	41 lessons
Site C	Child # 27	53 lessons
	Child # 29	69 lessons
Site D	Child # 38	62 lessons
	Child # 40	66 lessons

These numbers include the first ten sessions known as Roaming in the Known.

As we approached the end of the agreed-upon time for the project, we could see that progress had been made with the children, but we also knew that there would not be enough time to do all that we had hoped to do with most of them. 41 lessons, the lowest number given, minus ten lessons "in the known" is less than seven weeks of instruction. 69 lessons, the highest number given, minus ten for "in the known" is less than 12 weeks of instruction. With experienced Reading Recovery teachers, this might be adequate for some of the strongest children. We knew that it was not adequate for us in our first year. We were not ready to consider our children for discontinuation.

Given the above difficulties, despite our own personal growth as teachers and our knowledge that the children had made progress, we fell short of our hopes and expectations. We cannot claim to have adequately implemented a true Reading Recovery program.

Post Testing.

In late May, at each site, each teacher gave <u>The Early Detection of Reading Difficulty</u> diagnostic survey to all of the comparison children and to those who had been pre-tested but not considered for the project. We thought it unwise to have Reading Recovery teachers post-test their own children. Therefore, each teacher tested the two Reading Recovery children at another site.

The scores of the thirty-eight children - nine Reading Recovery children, twenty-one comparison children, and eight who were pretested but not considered for the project - are reported in full in Table II.

Explanation and Interpretation of the Data.

In Tables I and II, Column 1 indicates the sites at which the Reading Recovery Project took place. Site A had two teachers. Sites B, C, and D, each had one teacher. Column 2 gives an identification number for each child and indicates boy or girl. Column 3 gives the age of the child in years and months on the date of testing.

Column 4 reports the number of words correctly recognized at sight on a list of 15 high frequency words.

Column 5 shows the percentage of words read correctly, including self-corrections, in a story of 39 words. This must be interpreted carefully. We did not know the level of difficulty of this passage. It was selected, before the project began, to represent something at an average first grade level late in the school year. On this test, a score lower than 70% is almost without meaning. It usually means that a child, with some prompting, was probably picking out words recognized in isolation. It is very unlikely that children with scores at or below this level would be getting enough information to make much use of meaning or structural cues. This again illustrates our frustration at not knowing levels of text difficulty.

Column 6 reports a score for letter identification out of a total of 54. The children were shown 28 lower case and 26 upper case letter forms and asked to give the names, the sounds, or a word which begins with those letters.

Column 7 reports the score out of a total of 24 on the Concepts About Print Test. In this test, the examiner observes the child's behavior in the assisted reading of a simple book and makes note of directional behavior, confirmational behavior by visual inspection, knowledge of punctuation symbols, and some of the vocabulary of reading instruction.

Column 8 records the number of words written correctly, with controlled prompting, in a ten-minute time period.

Column 9 records, out of a total of 37, the number of phonemes correctly written in a short dictation test.

Column 10 indicates whether the child was N/C - not considered to be at risk and therefore not considered for Reading Recovery, RR - randomly selected for Reading Recovery, or DC - not chosen but retained for direct comparison with Reading Recovery children.

Table III reports the Pre Test and Post Test means for all three groups of children, the DC, the RR, and the N/C groups.

Table I Early Detection of Reading Difficulties

Pre Test January 1988

Site	Child	Age	Word	RRR	Letters	CAP	Write	Dist	Cat
A.1	1 grl	7-0	11	82%	53	16	15	21	N/C
	2 boy	6-9	7	31%	51	17	7	5	RR
	3 boy	7-3	1	21%	52	17	10	3	DC
	4 boy	7-1	1	0	35	16	8	2	DC
	5 boy	6-9	5	3%	53	15	3	4	DC
	6 grl	6-7	6	31%	52	15	16	2	DC
	7 boy	7-3	5	21%	52	13	5	4	RR
	8 grl	7-0	8	31%	50	14	13	26	N/C
A.2	9 boy	7-2	2	21%	51	11	9	14	DC
	10 boy	7-2	1	15%	49	14	6	12	DC
	11 grl	6-7	7	31%	48	16	12	14	RR
	12 boy	6-5	7	23%	51	10	12	20	DC
	13 boy	6-9	4	21%	46	12	6	17	N/C
	14 boy	7-3	2	3%	52	13	2	15	DC
	15 boy	7-6	4	5%	39	12	4	6	RR
	16 grl	7-1	11	77%	50	13	8	31	N/C
B.	17 boy	7-3	0	0	42	13	10	17	DC
	18 boy	6-7	0	3%	42	16	11	24	DC
	19 grl	7-0	4	46%	52	16	28	31	N/C
	20 grl	6-7	left the district - incomplete						
	21 grl	6-9	0	3%	52	11	5	3	DC

	22 boy	7-6	0	13%	41	17	8	27	RR
	23 boy	6-8	part-time DC, part time RR, - invalid						
	24 boy	6-10	1	5%	52	15	7	15	DC
C.	25 boy	7-3	2	15%	51	17	6	25	N/C
	26 boy	6-7	0	0	47	13	4	6	DC
	27 boy	6-11	1	0	49	15	7	18	RR
	28 boy	6-6	1	0	50	14	3	10	DC
	29 grl	6-8	2	5%	45	16	6	23	RR
	30 grl	6-9	0	3%	31	16	2	4	DC
	31 boy	6-6	0	0	44	15	7	17	DC
	32 grl	7-3	4	0	45	11	2	16	DC
D.	33 grl	6-9	8	15%	53	14	12	20	N/C
	34 grl	7-2	4	10%	39	15	6	6	DC
	35 grl	6-7	7	15%	51	13	14	12	N/C
	36 boy	7-4	1	5%	41	13	7	21	DC
	37 grl	6-8	1	0	52	11	13	18	DC
	38 boy	6-11	5	10%	51	12	7	17	RR
	39 boy	7-0	0	0	31	10	2	0	DC
	40 boy	6-6	1	5%	45	16	4	4	RR

Table II Early Detection of Reading Difficulties

Post Test May 1988

Site	Child	Age	Word	RRR	Letters	CAP	Write	Dist	Cat
A.1	1 grl	7-4	15	97%	54	22	39	37	N/C
	2 boy	7-1	12	82%	51	19	29	24	RR
	3 boy	7-7	10	82%	54	18	23	32	DC
	4 boy	7-5	4	33%	52	18	19	22	DC
	5 boy	7-1	12	79%	54	15	14	33	DC
	6 grl	6-11	13	95%	54	18	21	33	DC
	7 boy	7-7	13	95%	52	15	41	24	RR
	8 grl	7-4	13	100%	54	21	16	32	N/C
A.2	9 boy	7-6	10	79%	53	17	29	33	DC
	10 boy	7-6	3	51%	53	15	20	28	DC
	11 grl	6-7	13	90%	53	16	33	36	RR
	12 boy	6-9	8	72%	52	17	10	27	DC
	13 boy	7-1	10	74%	53	13	16	30	N/C
	14 boy	7-7	11	95%	54	13	22	28	DC
	15 boy	7-10	6	90%	52	18	23	35	RR
	16 grl	7-5	14	100%	53	19	40	37	N/C
B.	17 boy	7-7	6	13%	53	17	29	29	DC
	18 boy	6-11	9	64%	53	19	21	36	DC
	19 grl	7-4	9	82%	53	20	29	36	N/C
	20 grl	6-11	left the district - incomplete						
	21 grl	7-1	8	64%	54	16	16	32	DC

									21
	22 boy	7-10	6	33%	53	15	30	37	RR
	23 boy	7-0	part-time DC, part time RR, - invalid						
	24 boy	7-2	6	13%	52	21	17	30	DC
C.	25 boy	7-7	14	97%	52	18	28	37	N/C
	26 boy	6-11	6	36%	47	13	26	30	DC
	27 boy	7-3	11	87%	51	19	17	32	RR
	28 boy	6-10	2	28	51	15	16	23	DC
	29 grl	7-0	12	79%	54	22	29	33	RR
	30 grl	7-1	4	28%	45	15	21	17	DC
	31 boy	6-10	9	82%	52	15	26	33	DC
	32 grl	7-7	7	41%	52	14	22	26	DC
D.	33 grl	7-1	13	77%	54	16	20	32	N/C
	34 grl	7-6	3	33%	41	16	14	16	DC
	35 grl	6-11	13	95%	54	16	36	32	N/C
	36 boy	7-8	3	36%	45	17	18	26	DC
	37 grl	7-0	1	8%	51	11	8	14	DC
	38 boy	7-3	10	82%	51	18	19	37	RR
	39 boy	7-4	1	3%	49	12	4	5	DC
	40 boy	5-10	8	72%	46	16	18	31	RR

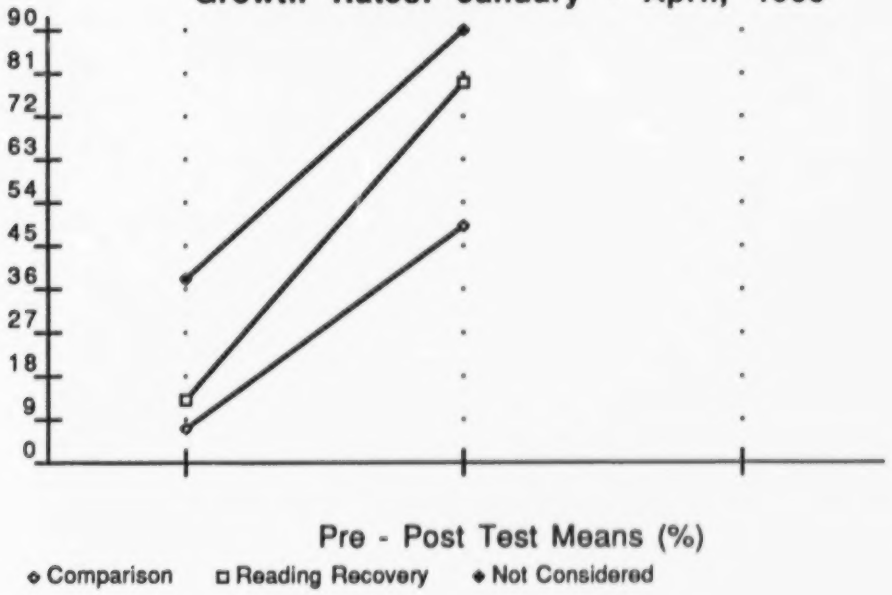
Table III The early Detection of reading Difficulties.

Comparisons of Pre Test and Post Test Mean Scores for Comparison Children, Reading Recovery Children, and Those Not Considered for the Program.

	Word	RR	Letters	CAP	Write	Dict
Comparison Children						
Pre Test	1.8	7.0%	45.9	13.6	6.9	10.9
Post Test	6.5	49.3%	51.0	15.8	18.9	26.3
Reading Recovery						
Pre Test	3.6	13.4%	46.8	14.9	6.7	13.1
Post Test	10.1	78.9%	51.4	17.6	26.6	32.1
Not/Considered						
Pre Test	6.9	37.8%	50.8	14.4	12.8	22.9
Post Test	12.6	90.3%	53.4	18.1	28.0	34.1

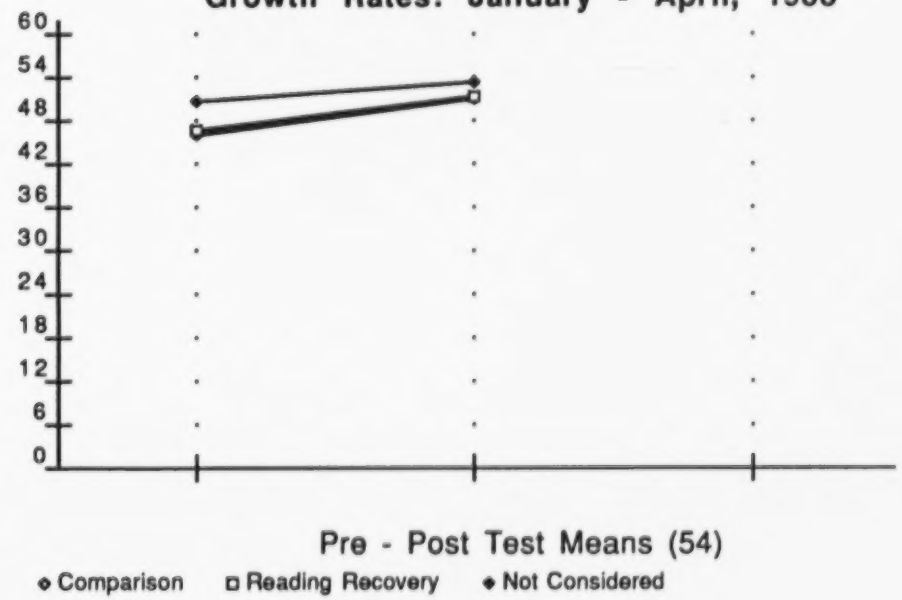
TEXT READING

Growth Rates: January - April, 1988

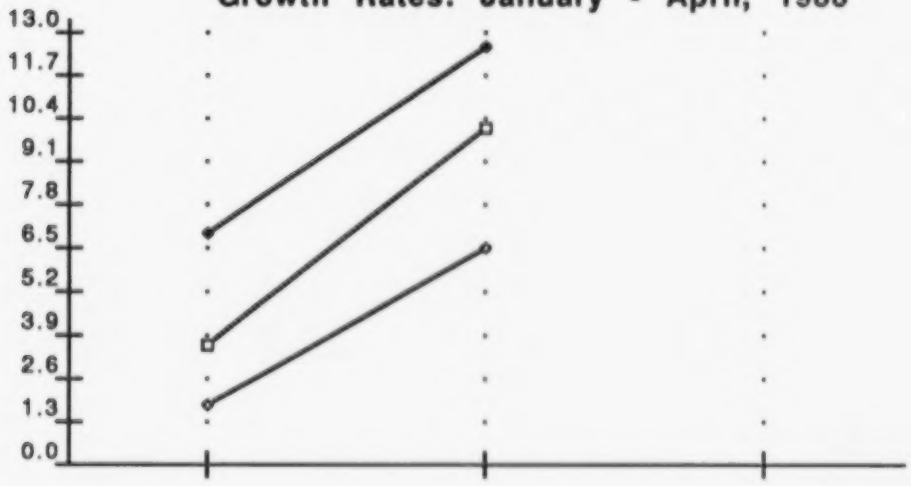


LETTER IDENTIFICATION TEST

Growth Rates: January - April, 1988



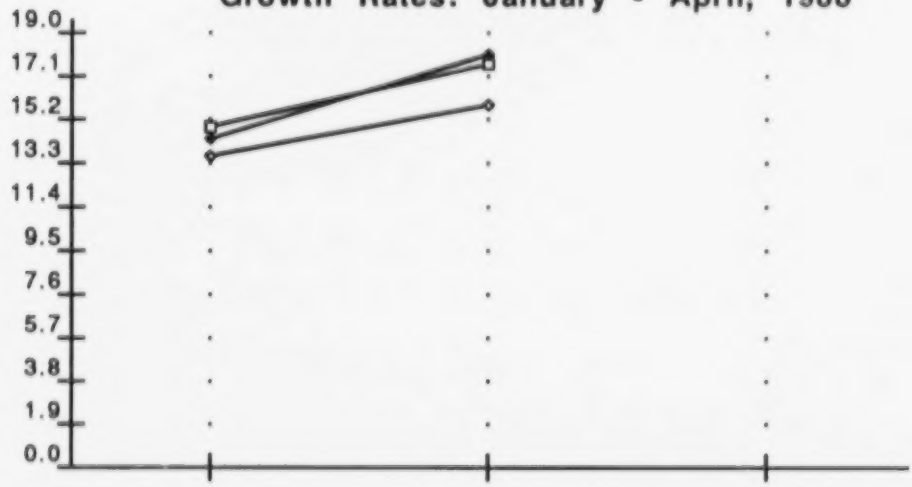
WORD TEST (Sight Vocabulary)
Growth Rates: January - April, 1988



Pre - Post Test Means (15)

◇ Comparison □ Reading Recovery ◆ Not Considered

CONCEPTS ABOUT PRINT
Growth Rates: January - April, 1988

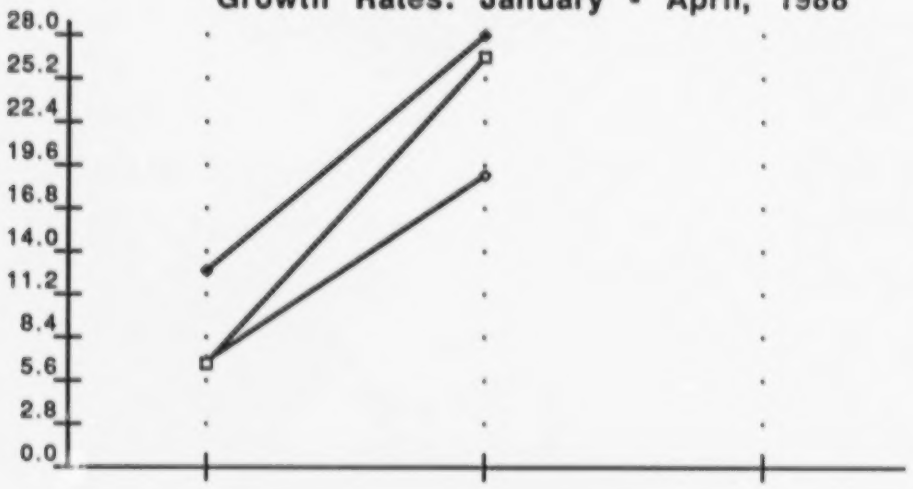


Pre - Post Test Means (24)

◇ Comparison □ Reading Recovery ◆ Not Considered

WRITING TEST

Growth Rates: January - April, 1988

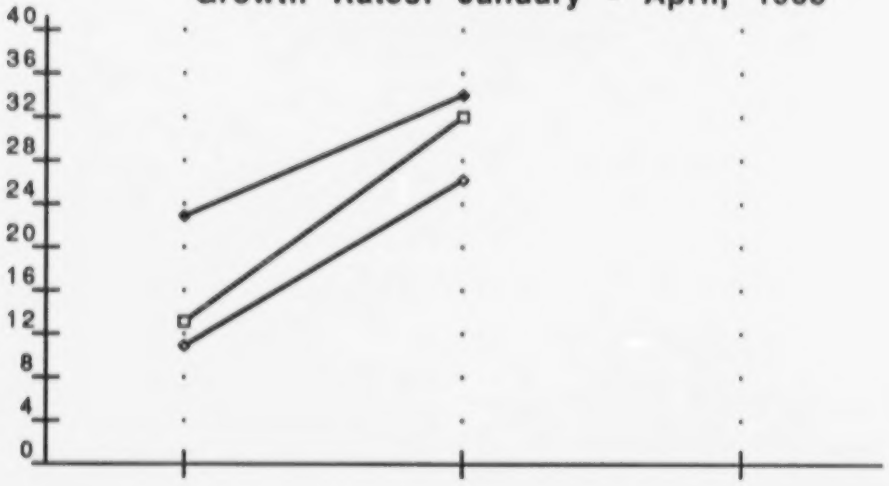


Pre - Post Test Means (10 minutes)

◆ Comparison ◻ Reading Recovery ◆ Not Considered

DICTATION

Growth Rates: January - April, 1988



Pre - Post Test Means (37)

◆ Comparison ◻ Reading Recovery ◆ Not Considered

The Effects of the Project.

In view of the instructional difficulties cited above and the insufficient duration of the project, it is not appropriate to attempt an assessment of Reading Recovery at this time. It is possible to make statements about this particular attempt, but it would be an injustice to refer to it as a Reading Recovery program in the full sense of that name.

In response to the first goal:

a) to find out what effects an independently mounted trial Reading Recovery program would have on children at risk in the first grade by the end of the first grade year, there are many encouraging signs.

The process of random selection produced a group of Reading Recovery children whose mean scores were a little higher than the direct comparison children at the beginning of the project. The Reading Recovery children made slightly greater gains than the comparison children and were also, as should be expected, higher on all measures at the end of the project. It is clear that the group we referred to as Reading Recovery children made good progress on all of the measures taken. However, some children in the direct comparison group did almost as well.

One possible observation now is that we selected the wrong children. In our desire to retain a group of children so that a fair comparison could be made, we excluded some of the children

for whom Reading Recovery was specifically intended. Our conclusion now is that we could have served our children better and learned as much, had we worked with the very lowest children - those who demonstrated the greatest need.

One of the most encouraging signs is the closing of the gap between the Reading Recovery children and those who were not at risk and not considered for the program. The Reading Recovery children who as a group were well behind them at the beginning had almost caught up with them by the end of the program.

In response to the second goal:

b) to find out over a period of time whether any beneficial effects would be sustained through later elementary school years, we have asked Portland Public Schools Research and Evaluation Department, despite the inadequacies of this program, to permit us to follow the progress of the thirty-eight children in the project over the next five years.

Successes may justifiably be attributed to whatever we were able to implement from Reading Recovery. If our children fail to maintain the benefits of this experience, it can only be attributed to our own incomplete knowledge of the program and not to Reading Recovery.

In response to the third goal:

c) to find out whether the Reading Recovery Program could be implemented successfully from the descriptions provided in <u>The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties</u> without experienced supervision, our views are as follows:

Concerning the independent implementation of Reading Recovery, we advise caution at this time. It is a complex program. We do not know how faithfully our interpretation followed those procedures which have been validated over time. We do not know how much we missed or how much we misinterpreted. We encountered serious difficulties with the selection of texts at appropriate levels of difficulty, and we suffered many of the frustrations of uncertainty. The text alone is not sufficient. The demonstration and critique sessions were indispensable. Our small group of children made some progress. We know that we have learned and would be able to avoid many of the problems we encountered in our trial year. However, we might well encounter other problems and need the guidance of people with more experience than ourselves.

We believe that Reading Recovery is a robust program. If no experienced assistance were available, most of its essential procedures can be learned with patient application and serious commitment. It is doubtful whether children's gains and continued progress over time would be as encouraging as they have been in New Zealand and Ohio. Efficient, cost-effective implementation is not likely to come quickly without experienced guidance. And experienced guidance is more readily available now than it was one year ago and is likely to increase steadily in the next few years. It should not be necessary in future for universities and school districts to proceed without it.

References

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Dunkeld C., and Dunbar Z., "The Early Detection of Reading Difficulty: The Use of Marie Clay's Diagnostic Survey and Recovery Procedures with First Grade Children." Resources in Education. ED 301 846, May, 1983.

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Sunshine. San Diego, The Wright Group. Postscript - One Year Later

Postscript - One Year Later

Some Comparisons Between The Reading Recovery Pilot Project Implemented Independently in Portland and Reading Recovery Implemented under Trained Teacher Leaders in Sites in Ohio.

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Portland State University

I am indebted to Portland Public Schools for the opportunity they gave me, described above, to attempt a small-scale, independent implementation of Reading Recovery in a major public school system. I particularly wish to acknowledge the encouragement given by the leaders of the Chapter I program and the assistance given by the Evaluation and Research Department.

In the Spring of 1988, again with a commitment from Portland Public Schools to implement Reading Recovery in Portland the following year, I applied and was admitted to the Ohio State University to train as a Reading Recovery Teacher Leader and set up a regional site for the preparation of Reading Recovery teachers and Teacher Leaders on my return. I requested a sabbatical leave from Portland State University and applied for and received a small grant from the National Diffusion Network to pay tuition costs, some of the costs of materials, and some of the costs of implementation.

This gave me the opportunity to observe Reading Recovery teachers-in-training at a number of sites in Ohio, and to compare what was done there with what was done in Portland the previous year. Some things in Portland were done very well and some were neglected or done very poorly. What follows, based on what I observed and written notes made at several sites, is a personal evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the Portland Pilot Project.

The five of us who carried out the Pilot Project in Portland tried to follow The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties very faithfully. However, our previous experiences and beliefs about reading drew us strongly to some parts of the text and caused us to overlook others. We were very aware of the need to make careful observations and interpretations of children's reading and writing behavior, and the ability to make moment to moment instructional decisions. We were equally aware of the needs to look for children's strengths, to respect children as learners, to have high expectations, and to encourage independence. I believe that this awareness came from my own early training at the National Froebel Foundation in London and from eight years of experience as a teacher in the British primary schools. They are what attracted me to Reading Recovery in the first place. As we worked with the text and shared experiences through "behind the glass" demonstrations and discussion, we became more and more familiar with Marie Clay's work, but there were gaps in our theory of the reading process and in our knowledge of

instructional procedures.

The group had a good understanding of directional movement and one-to-one matching. The cueing systems and the need for cross-checking and self-correction were also well understood. No doubt this came from general familiarity in this country with the work of Kenneth and Yetta Goodman in miscue analysis and the psycholinguistic theory of the reading process. We had a vague appreciation of other "strategies", but we had not sufficiently isolated locating known and unknown words, monitoring, and searching, as specific strategies to be observed and taught. It is probably fair to say that we were regarding cross-checking as the major, if not the only "strategy".

We experienced some difficulties at times in encouraging children to generate a story for their writing, but some Ohio teachers seem to have difficulty here too. In general, we had a good understanding of both the rationale and the procedures for the teaching of writing, the use of cut-up stories, and hearing sounds in words. I believe that there are many reasons for this. Many of the procedures were already familiar to Portland teachers because of their familiarity with:

a) the language experience approach to the teaching of reading,
b) the characteristics of developmental learning,
c) the work of Donald Durrell in hearing sounds in words,
d) the recent work of Charles Read, Edmund Henderson and his associates, and Donald Graves in the invented spelling of young children, and

e) Portland Public Schools concurrent adoption of a Whole Language Curriculum.

Additionally, the section on hearing sounds in words in The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties seems to be written more explicitly and is easier to follow than other sections of the text.

Towards the end of the year, the pacing of lessons and the engagement of the children was good. Reading was looked upon as problem solving behavior in a search for meaning. In familiar re-reading there was an appropriate emphasis on fluency and phrasing. Some teachers occasionally brought in procedures and materials from other programs, e.g., word banks from language experience activities or a puppet to stimulate writing. It became clear in Ohio that it is easy for even careful readers to miss parts of the Early Detection of Reading Difficulties. The interpretation and emphasis given by a trained Teacher Leader makes a lot of difference.

We examined and discussed the diagnostic tests for each child very carefully, but we did not write diagnostic summaries. We knew nothing about predictions for progress. We took running reading records every day, and looked at every error, but we did not write MSV beside every error to reveal which cueing system was being used. We did not do this because the text is permissive on this point. We computed accuracy percentages and self-correction ratios every day as guides to text level selection and instructional needs. I have already noted in the

initial report the difficulties we experienced with text sequencing and consequently with knowing whether we were accelerating or not. We probably, naively, thought that acceleration had more to do with the pacing of lessons than with superb sequencing and skilled teaching. We did not keep weekly graphs of children's progress, and we did not make special note of words taken to fluency. However, we did quite often ask our children to write all the words they knew - in the manner of the writing test. We knew our children well, but not well enough.

We did not understand the value of strong, properly focused book introductions, and we neglected some of the most useful procedures. We frequently had good discussions on, "In Reading Recovery, where are the opportunities for the teaching of reading?" and, within the limitations of our theory of the reading process, made good decisions about selecting teaching points for special attention.

Even though we read and discussed Reading: the Patterning of Complex Behavior, and even though we had a good understanding of the diagnostic intent of Concepts About Print, the amount of emphasis Reading Recovery places on visual attention to print escaped us. We were therefore insufficiently aware of the difficulties children experience coordinating their language predictions - their use of meaning and structure cues - with the print on the page. We too readily assumed that children would be looking at print in efficient and productive ways. Perhaps this is why we failed to make sufficient use, or even understand the

potential, of the magnetic letters. Apart from one teacher, we did not inject traditional phonics teaching into Reading Recovery. Our views on the role of phonics were completely in harmony with the procedures in The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties and Marie Clay's writings in Reading: The Patterning of Complex Behavior.

No supervision was given in Portland. My early experiences in Ohio taught me the value of skilled supervision. The first two supervisory visits I received were of immense value. They very quickly removed a number of uncertainties concerning teacher-child relationships, and gave excellent guidance on and demonstrations of some procedural matters. In Portland we provided very useful feedback to each other in the "behind the glass" sessions, but this was less powerful than the reassurance given by a knowledgeable supervisor. There were both advantages and disadvantages to the way the "behind the glass" demonstration sessions were conducted in Portland. On the one hand, we became very careful observers and describers of children's behavior, paid close attention to the child behind the glass, and were forced to think for ourselves and identify our own issues. It was good to be tentative and to keep an open mind, but the lack of informed leadership meant that we took longer to reach certain understandings and no doubt missed many others.

Conclusions

The Portland Pilot Project was a valuable learning

experience for all concerned. We learned that by following the Reading Recovery procedures described in The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties as faithfully as possible, we learned much about young children's early reading and writing behaviors, gained very useful observational skills, and learned how and when to use a number of effective teaching procedures. We were able to help nine individual first-grade children make good progress in learning to read and write.

We also learned that familiarity with Marie Clay's writings over a number of years and a good understanding of many other current ideas on the theory and practice of children's language development were of great value but were not sufficient for a complete, efficient implementation of a Reading Recovery program. We knew that the guidance of a trained Teacher Leader would be necessary to reinforce, clarify, and extend our learning.

Comparisons with Reading Recovery in established sites with trained Teacher Leaders showed us the value of skilled supervision and revealed many of the weaknesses specific to our program. Though we were able to make good progress in a limited amount of time, we knew that we had not accomplished as much as would have been done under trained leadership.

There is good reason to believe that Reading Recovery is cost effective when properly implemented, but it is much more than a set of procedures for helping low-achieving children learn to read. It is a network of ever increasing experience which began in New Zealand, is now well established in Ohio, and is

gradually spreading across North America. But it will be some time before it is readily available in every corner of Canada and the U.S.A. It will be very tempting for people with good intentions, well informed about current developments in the theory and practice of the teaching of reading, to attempt to implement it on their own. While much would be learned this way, it is a labor intensive program, and it would be an irresponsible use of funds to attempt to implement it on a large scale without trained leadership.